

Seventy Times Seven

By Nikki Moen

You can apologize to others
One thousand one hundred times
for committed wrongs
and hang your atonements out to dry on the power lines
(they have elastic, hard woven skins)

But how often do you say
how often do you turn to yourself and say
Please forgive me
I'm so sorry for dark musty places
and the fact that I *always* give you truth serum

I'm sorry I have taken
your polished and iridescent pearls
and thrown them in the grimy pig pit-
you see, I had forgotten
how really precious they are...

So let's take this dragging sackcloth
and sew it up into a robe thick and warm
let's only stay in bright safe rooms
and keep our treasure within

It is then and only then, when we will accept our own expiation.